

The logo for IPARK ATHLETICS features the word "IPARK" in a large, bold, dark green font with a white outline, and the word "ATHLETICS" in a smaller, bold, dark green font below it.

# IPARK ATHLETICS

Policies and Procedures Guidebook  
2022-2023

## Mission

Park School Athletics program creates opportunities for every student to develop (educational, social, emotional, and physical) skills through sports-specific activities, team experiences, competition, being outside of their comfort zone, doing different roles on the team, and providing leadership opportunities. We are interested in the well-rounded development of our athletes, helping them learn the value of Character, Commitment, Responsibility, Teamwork, and Enjoyment as much as the final result of games.

## Introduction

Park’s goal for “educational athletics” is to offer an inclusive program where students learn about the value of being part of a team and how they, as individuals, can work hard to make that team better. The Park School athletics program is broken into two distinct yet connected components. The first piece is an introductory, intramural program for fourth grade students which takes place two afternoons a week. The second part is an interscholastic, competitive program for fifth through eighth graders which meets four times per week. Students are not required to participate in either of these programs, but once they choose to do so, students and families must understand that they are making a commitment to attend practices and games for the season. This handbook is designed to help students and parents or guardians become more familiar with Park’s Athletics department and program.

## Athletic Offerings

### Grade 4

Fall	Winter	Spring
Soccer	Basketball	Lacrosse
Field Hockey	TBD	Softball

### Grades 5 – 8

Fall	Winter	Spring
Soccer	Basketball	Lacrosse
Field Hockey	Ice Hockey	Track and Field
Cross Country	TBD	Softball
Flag Football		
Volleyball		

## **Health, Safety and Medical Information**

Each fall, all Park School students must complete and return the School's health and emergency contact form as well as provide a physical form signed by a physician. Students will not be allowed to participate in athletics contests until these documents are submitted. The doctor's physical form must be completed within one year of the participating season's start. If the physical form expires during the season, the student will become ineligible to practice or play in games until a new physical form is turned in to the School's Health Office. The Park School employs an athletic trainer from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. when students are in season. The Athletic Trainer is the first responder for all injuries and emergencies involving athletes and will contact parents or guardians directly whenever necessary. If an athlete is injured they should see the Athletic Trainer immediately. The Athletic Trainer, in conjunction with a student's doctor (if seen) will decide when the athlete can return to play. When an athlete sees a physician due to an injury (whether it occurred at school or not) that physician must provide a return-to-play protocol to the Athletic Trainer. Without this doctor's note, the athlete will not be allowed back to participate in Park School athletic practices or games. Park's coaches are required to be certificated in CPR and First Aid.

Students can still learn from the sidelines and an injured student should try to attend all team functions to the best of their ability. If a student is unable to participate in their daily class schedule (including physical education) then they are excused from participating in athletics that day.

## **Team Placement**

Every student wishing to participate will be placed on a roster within the program as long as they are meeting the expectations and responsibility for the team/athletics program. Students new to the athletics program can choose to experience a few days "trial period" to evaluate different sport options. This is more common for Grade 5 students and/or students new to Park. A final decision on participation in the activity must be made before team placements are finalized.

We field one or more teams per program based on the number of interested students. When there is a need for more than one team for a program, there will be days set aside for the evaluation and placement of students on Varsity and Junior Varsity teams at the start of each sports season. Individual decisions for students in Grades 5-8 are made based on age, athletic ability, sport specific experience, and physical and emotional readiness. The intent is to allow students to develop, participate confidently, and earn meaningful playing time. When possible, we build teams for fifth and/or sixth graders only. At the end of the evaluation process, coaches will meet one on one with each student to let them know their appropriate team placement. The placement decision can be difficult for a student and coaches will do everything to make sure the meeting is handled with care and respect for all involved. Students who have questions about their placement are encouraged to speak directly with their coaches the next day.

Once rosters are established, students are expected to honor their commitment to their assigned team (They are not able to change athletics teams after placement). We believe that students who commit to our program will find positive leadership roles in their team placement, and will grow as a student and athlete.

## **Practice Information**

*Grade 4* practices run from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m., two days per week. Girls play on Mondays and Thursdays. Boys play on Tuesday and Fridays depending on the sport. The practice schedule for each sport is communicated before the start of the season.

*Grade 5 to Grade 8* practices run from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. except on early dismissal days in the fall and spring. The winter season is more complicated due to court space and ice times; therefore the winter practice schedule is distributed at the beginning of the winter season. Practice times and game information are listed on the Park website. Please confirm this information often. Schedule changes do occur.

## **Attendance and Playing Time**

The athletics program strives to teach personal responsibility. Learning to uphold one's commitments is paramount to our program. Attendance at all practices, games, meetings, and weekend tournaments is expected. We understand that conflicts arise throughout the season. Any attendance change that arises after the end of the academic day (e.g., a 3:30 appointment that allows a student to remain on campus through the end of classes but requires a student to miss athletics) should be communicated directly to the coaches and/or the athletic director as early as possible. This is very helpful and allows coaches and the athletic program advance notice to plan accordingly. When practices or games are missed, students should expect to see an impact on their playing time and/or starting position. This is to reward students who are at practice every day.

Junior Varsity (JV) players athletes who are attending practice regularly can expect playing time in each game. Varsity players who are attending practice regularly can expect some playing time in every game, but equal playing time is not guaranteed.

If a student accumulates a significant number of absences during the same season, a meeting with the parents or guardians will be scheduled to discuss the matter.

When a student is excused from participating in Physical Education (PE) class due to injury or illness, they are also unable to participate in athletics. In these cases, we expect that the student will still attend the practice or game and observe from the sideline if physically able.

## **Away Game Information**

Bus departure and return times are listed on the Park School website and families should confirm this information regularly. Directions to our competitor schools are also listed on the Park website.

After the game is completed, students will return to school on the team bus or go home with their parents or guardians. Students who wish to depart from an away game with anyone other than their own parent or guardian must provide permission from a parent or guardian prior to the bus's initial departure from Park. Students will not be released to Uber, Lyft or taxi drivers. Return times are listed on the Park website and we

ask that students be collected soon after the bus returns to school. Coaches will remain with their students until they are collected. A conversation may be had with families if a student's ride is repeatedly late.

### **Practice/Game Cancellations and Snow Days**

From time to time it is necessary to cancel athletics games and/or practices. In most cases this is due to inclement weather and/or unsafe playing conditions. On these occasions the Athletics Department staff will post the information on The Park School website and notify parents or and guardians via email if possible. Unless instructed otherwise, please assume that students will remain at school until 4:30 p.m. for a practice, team meeting, or study hall in lieu of the competition. When school is canceled due to inclement weather, all practices and games are canceled as well.

### **Student Responsibilities**

***Uniforms and equipment:*** Team uniforms and other equipment are issued to students at the beginning of each season and they are expected to be clean and in good condition. These uniforms and equipment must be returned as soon as possible after the team's final contest. Uniforms that are damaged during regular game play will be repaired or replaced by the School. Uniforms lost or damaged by other means may be charged to families. Uniforms are to be worn for interscholastic contests only and should not be worn for practices or physical education classes. If a student does not have their complete uniform for a game, students may see an impact on their playing time and/or starting position. Being prepared for games is one of the ways in which students learn to be responsible for themselves and to be positive members of their team.

***Behavior:*** Park School students are ambassadors for our school. Their behavior on buses, in locker rooms, and on the campuses of other schools should reflect that role. Students who do not represent themselves and their school appropriately will not be allowed to remain on a Park School team.

***Player Agreement:*** Students will be given a [player agreement](#) at the start of the school year. This agreement outlines expectations for both students and coaches. Students and their parents or guardians are expected to read the contract, sign and return it before the first game.

### **Locks and Locker Room**

At the beginning of each year, all students in Grades 5-8 will be assigned a lock and locker to keep their personal belongings safe. Coaches will teach the children how to use a combination lock, but if students prefer to use their own lock from home, they may do so. We require that the code to personal locks be shared with the PE Department. Students are expected to keep their belongings safely locked in their lockers. The gymnasiums and locker rooms are used by outside groups in the evenings all year long. Please remember that our locker rooms are not private spaces and the Athletics Department cannot be responsible for belongings that are not locked up properly

### **Park's Coaches**

Whenever possible, Park’s coaches are members of the School’s full time faculty and staff. It is important for our coaches to know and understand both the School’s philosophy and culture as well as its students. It is also important for students to see and know their teachers in environments other than the classroom. When a qualified faculty or staff person cannot be found to lead a team, the Director of Athletics will hire an adult from outside the School community. Parents or guardians of current students will not be hired to coach Park teams unless they are also full-time members of the faculty or staff.

### **Facilities Information**

***Outside usage:*** The Park School athletics facilities are spaces used commonly with the Physical Education Department and include playing fields, gymnasiums, locker rooms, equipment, and storage closets. Park’s playing fields can only be used by Brookline youth sports groups in the afternoons beginning at 4:45 p.m. with prior approval from Park’s Rentals Coordinator. Priority, though, is given to Park School parents or guardians who serve as coaches of these youth teams.

### **Behavioral Guidelines for Parents, Guardians, Athletes, and Coaches**

We hope and expect that families will be involved with and supportive of their children’s athletics endeavors. Should parents or guardians have any questions or concerns about how their children are experiencing the season, they should contact the Director of Athletics and Coach. Parents and/or guardians should not approach coaches during games to inquire about playing time or appropriate positions for their child and should not speak with others about the ability of participating athletes (either Park students or our opponents) or officials within earshot of other spectators. Like coaches and teachers, family members are role models for our young athletes. Parents and/or guardians must refrain from coaching their children from the sidelines because it causes confusion, mixed messages, and frustration for players, coaches, and other parents.

Families can be most helpful by enabling their child to attend as many practices and games as possible. Honoring commitments is a valuable lesson we teach through athletics. Families can help with that by scheduling medical appointments and other potential conflicts on off days.

The New England Prep School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) provides valuable guidelines for athletes’ proper conduct and sportsmanship, as well as guidelines for spectators. The Park School fully supports these guidelines:

#### ***Proper Conduct and Good Sportsmanship:***

At the heart of this lie several terms that are often hard to define – yet no more important task confronts teachers and coaches than to set standards that are fair and honorable. “Proper conduct” and “good sportsmanship” refer to such standards as these:

1. Treat other people as you know they should be treated, and as you know they would like to be treated.

2. Follow the rules of your game.
3. Treat officials and opponents with respect at all times.
4. Accept absolutely and without quarrel the final decision of any official.
5. Honor visiting teams and spectators as your guests, and treat them as such.
6. Behave as an honored guest when visiting another school.
7. Be gracious in victory and defeat; learn especially to take defeat well.
8. Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
9. Remember that your actions on and off the field reflect on you and your school.

***Guidelines For Spectators:***

Spectators – whether students, faculty, parents, guardians, alumni or friends – bear important responsibilities to the School for the atmosphere and conduct of games, whether home or away.

1. Spectators should watch games from those areas defined by each school as spectator areas. They must not run up and down the sidelines, call to players, coaches, or officials in an unsportsmanlike manner, go onto the field of play, or deface property. Any action that detracts from the ability of coaches, players, and officials to do their best is not acceptable.
2. Spectators who behave inappropriately will be asked to leave a Park School athletics event. Further, if the behavior continues, the athlete associated with this spectator may be removed from the program.
3. As spectators at Park competitions, members of the community serve as ambassadors for The Park School. The positive spirit and constructive partnership modeled by Park spectators should always be consistent with Park's community values, and we are grateful to all for supporting our students in their hard work.